

**STATE PLANNING COUNCIL  
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

April 25, 2013 at 6:30 p.m.  
Department of Administration

**DRAFT MINUTES**

**ATTENDANCE**

**TAC members present**

Ms. Fran Shocket, Chair  
Mr. Everett Stuart, Vice Chair  
Mr. Lloyd Albert  
Mr. Michael Bliss representing  
    Ms. Dinalyn Spears  
Mr. Michael Cassidy  
Mr. Russ Chateauneuf  
Mr. Albert Dahlberg  
Mr. George Monaghan  
Ms. Lillian Picchione  
Mr. Daniel Porter  
Mr. Paul Romano  
Mr. Barry Schiller  
Mr. Robert Shawver  
Mr. Henry Sherlock  
Ms. Pam Sherrill  
Dr. Robert Vanderslice  
Mr. Michael Walker  
Mr. Michael Wood

Public Member  
RI Association of Railroad Passengers  
AAA Southern New England  
Narragansett Indian Tribe  
  
Public Member  
RI Department of Environmental Management  
Public Member  
RI Consulting Engineers (RICE)  
RI Public Transit Authority  
RI Airport Corporation  
Public Member  
RI Sierra Club  
RI Department of Transportation  
Construction Industries of RI  
RI Chapter, APA  
RI Department of Health  
RI Economic Development Corporation  
Town of Burrillville / RI League of Cities and Towns

**TAC members absent**

Mr. David Everett  
Ms. Sue Barker  
Mr. Dan Baudouin  
Mr. Alan Brodd  
Mr. Richard Crenca  
Dr. Judith Drew

City of Providence  
Greenways Alliance  
Providence Foundation  
Town of Cumberland  
City of Warwick  
Governor's Commission on Disabilities

**Others in attendance**

Mr. Corey Bobba  
Ms. Joelle Kanter  
Mr. Peter Pavao  
Mr. Bob Rocchio  
Mr. Kevin Viveiros  
Mr. Christos Xenophontos

FHWA  
The Providence Foundation  
VHB  
    RIDOT  
Pare Corp.  
RIDOT

**Statewide Planning Staff Present**

Mr. Kevin Flynn  
Mr. Jared Rhodes  
Ms. Karen Scott  
Ms. Linsey Callaghan  
Ms. Ronnie Sirota

Associate Director  
Chief  
Assistant Chief  
Supervising Planner  
Principal Planner

## **AGENDA ITEMS**

### **1. Call to Order**

Ms. Shocket called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

### **2. Approval of February 28, 2013 Meeting Minutes – *for action***

Upon motion to approve by Mr. Cassidy, seconded by Mr. Bliss, the meeting minutes were accepted unanimously.

### **3. Public Comment on Agenda Items**

There was no public comment on the Agenda items.

### **4. Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21)**

- Overview of the new federal transportation bill provided by FHWA – *for information*:

5. Mr. Corey Bobba, FHWA regional representative and Mr. Christos Xenophontos of RIDOT presented on Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (MAP-21). Mr. Bobba stated that MAP-21 represents a transformation of the policy and programmatic framework for investments to guide the growth and development of the country's vital transportation infrastructure. Mr. Bobba gave the history of the various transportation legislative bills including ISTEA in 1991, TEA-21 in 1998, SAFETEA-LU in 2005, and the new legislation MAP-21 in 2012. He said that MAP-21 is a revolutionary change primarily because it is performance-based planning and programming and includes new policies. The U.S. DOT defines it as a strategic approach that uses systems information to make investment and policy decisions to achieve national performance goals. Performance-based management includes more transparency and accountability.

Mr. Bobba noted that the TAC's Supplement on MAP-21 includes the seven goals set out by Congress. He asked how the federal government can determine the return on investments. The federal funding should go to federal interests. The public including federal, state, and municipal levels should work together. Each of the goals has a description. A structure is then set up to advance these goals. How can we best move these goals through the use of federal funds. Mr. Bobba explained each of the goals.

Mr. Dahlberg asked if an example can be given as well as asking how projects would be approved under MAP-21. Mr. Bobba stated that the projects will be selected according to the baseline performance data of current conditions. Mr. Xenophontos stated that first the level of performance desired should be set and then try to obtain the funding. The target can be determined according to the goal and funding level. Most important for RIDOT at this time is the percentage of deficient bridges; it is now 20 percent. Mr. Bobba added that if you look at the project selection process now, none deals with physical condition.

Ms. Callaghan pointed out that the kind of detail regarding performance will be built into the next TIP, including the condition of the roadways. Mr. Shawver stated the biggest difference in the next TIP is that it will be more data driven. Ms. Callaghan stated that the next time when a bridge is selected, we will know how it improves the deficiency percentage. Mr. Bobba stated that the question to be asked then would be "what does \$20 million do on a particular project compared to other goals." Mr. Xenophontos asked what level of performance do we want the system to provide. Mr. Shawver indicated that the numbers are staggering. To bring in the required funding for RI's highway system would be almost \$1 billion in the next five years. Mr. Schiller stated that Statewide Planning previously

gave a ballpark figure with its “sink or swim” scenarios for the Blue Ribbon Commission. Mr. Albert pointed out that the bonding issue from two years ago changed the situation. Mr. Shawver stated that the State of Rhode Island does not contribute funding for transportation except for the required match. Because of the lack of much state funding infrastructure repairs are done with federal funding, whereas it should be state funding.

Mr. Chateaufort asked Mr. Shawver if RIDOT is concerned with the possibility that the federal government can determine what can be spent. Mr. Shawver said that the numbers now dictate what Rhode Island can do. Rhode Island has a very open, transparent process which he would like to continue. But he wants to improve Rhode Island’s performance. Mr. Xenophontos stated that some details will not be clarified until next year. Ms. Scott explained that the difference is that the federal government narrowed where the funding can be used, i.e., nationally significant roads. Ms. Scott stated now the focus is mostly on the National Highway System (NHS) for the federal resources.

Mr. Shawver added that the change at RIDOT is to be more data driven. For example, Mr. Shawver stated there are four different ways RIDOT collects bridge data. Mr. Xenophontos stated that it is easier to access the condition of bridges than road pavements. Mr. Bobba said this will be a lot of collaboration between RIDOT, Statewide Planning, RIPTA, the Office of Management of Budget, and FHWA. There are a lot of resources from FHWA including those online at [www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/map21/) and [www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpm/](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/tpm/) RIDOT was even featured on FHWA’s website for its efforts regarding performance management.

Mr. Schiller asked if certain roads funded with STP have a lower priority? Mr. Shawver replied these roads would still be eligible. Mr. Bobba stated that if a state meets its targets on the STP it can use funding for other classifications.

#### **5. Rhode Island Strategically Targeted Affordable Roadway Solutions (RI\*STARS)**

Statewide planning is excited to partner with RIDOT on this cutting edge project to implement short term solutions for big changes in those areas. RI\*STARS has a line item in the TIP. Mr. Bob Rocchio of RIDOT and Mr. Peter Pavao of VHB explained the program. It addresses safety and congestion. The goal is quick implementation and can be used for federally aid and non-federally aid roadways. It is needed to more effectively and efficiently meet the customers’ needs in order to do more with less. Unfortunately there are limited funding combined with increased needs. Mr. Rocchio gave examples of countermeasures that can be quickly implemented. The RI\*STARS project began as a pilot in May 2010 and was followed by the Aquidneck Island Transportation Study.

RIDOT ranked the top 50 crash locations and top bottleneck locations. They held public forums on Aquidneck Island to solicit input from local residents. The local perception on the locations was accurate as compared with the data driven selections. In addition, there was an analysis of all users. Road Safety Audits (RSA) were also done in specific locations.

Mr. Pavao spoke about the bottleneck reduction program which consists of 25 locations in Rhode Island with high levels of congestion. The two major factors included limited physical capacity and poorly functionally traffic signals. He explained other factors as well as identifying many of the locations. Mr. Walker asked why only the most serious crashes were included. It was explained to start this process they used these factors. Mr. Romano asked if the TAC would consider road separations if necessary. Mr. Pavao answered yes they would. Mr. Rocchio highlighted Ms. Sherrill’s comments regarding signage and the resulting problematic congestion on Route 6 as it merges onto I-95. As a result of Mr. Sherrill’s

comments, RIDOT's solution was to extend the road allowing people to merge into a location where drivers can see the other cars. This solution cost only \$2,000 and probably prevented many crashes.

Mr. Stuart asked if there will be construction for short term solutions this season. Mr. Rocchio replied some would be quicker, others take more time. Mr. Schiller stated that there are situations for example with the buses that sometimes 30 people are waiting on a bus for one car which can sometimes block intersections. Also, there is no enforcement on left turns near the U.S. Post Office. There is no real enforcement of that and it should be considered. Mr. Rocchio spoke of bicycles riding on sidewalks and not following the rules of the road. Bike Newport did some training and education. There is a need to educate people about this as well as fixing signals, bike lanes, signs, etc. before there is enforcement.

## **6. Staff Report**

Ms. Callaghan reported that Statewide Planning had a recent meeting with RIDEM's Air Quality Unit regarding Rhode Island air quality status and how that relates to transportation conformity. She reported that the air Rhode Islanders breathe has improved over the last 3 years and as of July 20, 2013 Rhode Island will be classified as attainment for its 8 hour ozone standard. This means that the State will lose its designation as a nonattainment area for air quality and air quality determination for transportation conformity will no longer be required. The state of course will continue to monitor its air quality and depending on the temperatures this summer could easily lapse back into non-attainment for ozone. However in the meantime, the TIP and its amendments, Long Range Transportation Plan, and transportation projects will not have to be checked for transportation air quality conformity.

Ms. Callaghan followed up with the email TAC members received last week inviting TAC members to attend a presentation of the Rhode Island Statewide Travel Demand Model. This model simulates actual travel patterns and future demand conditions. In recent years the model has been primarily used to provide travel forecasting and air quality conformity determinations for the Long Range Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The Rhode Island Statewide Model also has large untapped potential for land use planning, congestion control during construction projects, and transit planning. The presentation includes how the model works and what goes into creating the maps and data for future travel demand that are included in the TIP and LRTP.

Ms. Callaghan also reported that Mr. Ben Jacobs, Principal Research Technician started with Statewide Planning last month. The TAC will meet him next month.

Ms. Scott reported that at the next TAC meeting members review and input will be asked on the draft FY 2014 Work Program. However in advance of the formal review, staff would like to make the current draft available to you and offer you the opportunity to any potential feedback and input at this time. If you have any comments please provide them to Ms. Scott by the end of next week. Otherwise staff looks forward to the formal presentation of the FY 2014 work program next month.

Ms. Sirota reported on the RI Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program. The SRTS on-call consultants are working on the design for the Round 2 schools assigned to them (Jamestown & Newport have their own consultant) as well as the schools in Round 2 working on their education, encouragement, and law enforcement activities. Staff will be holding the last of the SRTS Course workshops next week: April 30 at Western Hills Middle School in Cranston and May 1 at Thompson Middle School in Newport. If anyone here would like to attend, Ms. Sirota can provide the information. Tuesday, June 4 staff expects to hold what is called a Walking School Bus workshop to give SRTS awarded schools more information

and techniques in implementing this concept. Staff hopes to offer it to many other schools in the state this coming fall.

Mr. Stuart asked for the status of the Rail Plan. Ms. Callaghan answered that there is work being done behind the scene. Project evaluation will be soon.

**7. Additional Public Comment**

There was none.

**8. Other Business – *for discussion***

Mr. Vanderslice stated that a study of asthma in children showed that for children under 18 who live within 100' of a highway, there are more children who have asthma. Mr. Vanderslice could send more information on this. There could be many reasons for this including some that do not have anything to do with air quality. Mr. Albert asked if proximity to schools was examined. The study requires more controls. Mr. Shawver added it includes major roadways, not just highways. Mr. Schiller reported that the Sierra Club and the Coalition for Transportation Choices supports bills related to RIPTA. TAC members can contact Mr. Schiller for more information as well as for information on bus safety. May 11 is National Train Day. There will be a reception at the Kingston station museum and at the Providence train station. On May 17 Ms. Bari George will hold a Bike Fest in Newport.

**9. Adjournment**

Upon motion of Mr. Bliss, seconded by Mr. Cassidy, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Submitted By: Ronnie Sirota, Principal Planner to Linsey Callaghan, TAC Secretary.

Respectfully submitted,

Linsey Callaghan, TAC Secretary